

● (8:50 p.m.)

We would be delinquent if we did not insist that this important question be straightened out. The hon. gentleman should be consistent. When his colleague the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Olson) was faced with just such a problem as this, why did he not move an amendment to Bill C-176 excepting cattle and calves from that socialistic, all-embracing piece of legislation? He faced exactly the same problem as the minister in charge of the Wheat Board is facing today. If this is what should be done, why do not all ministers of the Crown act in the same way, particularly when they are all nicely tied together as members of a smoothly working administration, free of criticism of one another, loyal to the top and dedicated to the service of those at the bottom?

There is nothing partisan about this. We are all, I presume, on both sides of the House mindful of the welfare of the western farmer. The committee system is supposed to be an improvement upon our usual antagonistic procedure. We meet in small groups in the presence of expert witnesses. We are supposed to avoid acting like prima donnas and get down to the nitty-gritty in a situation where farmers hear from grain experts and members of the Wheat Board, where ministers talk man-to-man over the bargaining table so that it is not necessary for the prima donnas to get into the act. The committee system does not work unless there is frankness, and I must say that this evening I see no evidence of the frankness one would expect.

It should be extremely easy for a well-meaning minister to let us know exactly what grains are to be the subject of liens. There is no need for double-talk. If there are things to be assumed in the bill, there should be no necessity for assuming anything. Grains of all kinds means rye, rapeseed and flaxseed. They are to be included in the bill, otherwise I can see no reason for mentioning them. If there is to be no change, why talk as though there is to be a change, and if there is a change we have the right, nay, the duty, to find out what these changes are to be.

We keep in constant touch with the farm population. They ask various questions of us and we would look foolish if we were unable to explain to them or their representatives the legislation which purports to straighten out the problems of agriculture. Most of the members from western Canada have a working knowledge of agriculture and we should be able to explain to those who sent us here exactly what we are doing; and if we are not, we should be able to seek advice and assistance from the minister and from his 40 PhDs sitting in the ivory tower. They should be able to translate these proposals into simple, effective English, or French as the case might be, so that we could go back to our constituents and say that not only are we alert to their problems but that we have the benefit of assistance and advice from the vast civil service repository of wisdom which is to be found here in Ottawa.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

24107—58½

Prairie Grain Advance Payments Act

Mr. Horner: May I direct a question to the minister?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The hon. member has already spoken, but he may direct a question for clarification.

Mr. Horner: Would the minister state clearly that a cash advance taken on wheat, oats or barley could in no way be paid off by deductions with respect to rye, rapeseed or flax?

Mr. Lang: I am glad to say again to the hon. member, as I did in committee, that rapeseed, rye and flax are in no way included in the operations of the agency at this stage although there is a possibility that at some later date, in certain circumstances, including the full support of the producers, they could be involved.

The legislation before the House would only require that if an advance were taken on wheat, repayment could be effected when wheat, barley and oats were delivered, and no other grain; and similarly for barley and oats, when wheat, oats and barley were delivered, but no other grain. The difficulty in the committee was not in relation to whether the words "grain of any kind" were in the amendment but, rather, in the words "upon which an advance has been taken" which, as I pointed out, might have restricted the advance to the very kernels of grain on which the advance had been taken and that would have required a totally different administrative procedure.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the said motion?

Mr. Horner: On division.

Motion No. 1 (Mr. Lang) agreed to on division.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: This might be an appropriate time for the Chair to advise hon. members of further reflections with respect to the procedural acceptability of the motions with which we are to deal later. I wish to do this now in order that hon. members may have an opportunity to reflect on those observations and in anticipation of a point of order which may be raised with respect to the motions which are to be proposed at the report stage.

After closer consideration of motion No. 6 in the name of the minister in charge of the Canadian Wheat Board, I have misgivings as to the procedural acceptability of the motion. It seems to the Chair that it may go beyond the provisions of Bill C-239. The position of the Chair in regard to that motion might affect consideration of the comment made by the Chair earlier today with respect to motion No. 7 in the name of the hon. member for Saskatoon-Biggar (Mr. Gleave). It seems to me—I make this observation so that hon. members will know that the Chair has these doubts—that motion No. 6 would amend the act rather than the bill now before us.

Having made these comments I would welcome any submissions which hon. members care to make on the point. In any event, if motion No. 6 is in fact defective from the procedural standpoint, this decision, as I have indicated, can only be made following argument if hon. members desire to assist the Chair. It seems to me that a consensus could be reached by hon. members on the